

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 02791 01 OF 02 170355Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 EB-07 SS-15 SP-02 INR-07

L-03 SSO-00 INRE-00 SIL-01 H-01 /058 W

-----091280 170417Z /15

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3592

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SUVA

AMCONSUL AUCKLAND

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WELLINGTON 02791

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

DEPT PASS CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, FJ, US

SUBJECT: FIJI PRIMIN SEEK U.S. ASSURANCES ON DOCK STRIKE

REF: SUVA 0868 (NOTAL), SUVA 0867 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: FIJIAN PRIMIN RATA MARA HAS SOUNDLY CRITICIZED NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA, UK, FRANCE, AND US FOR LACK OF SUPPORT DURING CURRENT FIJI DOCK STRIKE. REQUEST DEPARTMENT INFORM EMBASSY OF ANY FIJI-RELATED ACTIVITIES OF US LONGSHOREMEN AND SUGGEST ANY COURSE OF ACTION WHICH MIGHT BE RESPONSIVE TO RATA MARA WITHOUT INTERPOSING USG BETWEEN UNIONISTS AND GOF. END SUMMARY

2. FOLLOWING INFORMATION REPORTED BY EMBASSY SUVA JULY 16:

A. ANGER AND FRUSTRATION OVER WHAT HE SEES AS "CONSPIRACY" TO FORCE GOF KNUCKLE UNDER TO FIJI DOCK STRIKERS PROVOKED PRIMEMIN RATU SIR KAMISESE MARA TO HEATED CRITICISM LAST NIGHT OF
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PAGE 02 WELLIN 02791 01 OF 02 170355Z

"INDIFFERENCE" OF TRADITIONAL FRIENDS, INCLUDING US, TO EFFORTS OF FOREIGN UNIONS ISOLATE ISLAND NATION FROM SOURCES OF SUPPLY. HE SHARPLY CONTRASTED ABSENCE OF PERSONAL ASSURANCES OF SUPPORT FROM FRIENDLY FOREIGN MISSIONS IN SUVA WITH RECENT GUARANTEE OF PRC AMB MI THAT CHINESE STAND READY SHIP ANY AMOUNT OF GOODS TO FIJI. OCCASION WAS BASTILLE DAY RECEPTION OF FRENCH CHARGE' D'AFFAIRES.

B. EMOTIONAL OUTBURST, ACCOMPANIED BY FINGER WAGGING AT NEW ZEALAND HICOM, FRENCH CHARGE, AND ME, INCLUDED DENUNCIATION OF UK, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, AS UNRELIABLE FRIENDS AND SUPPLIERS OWING THEIR INABILITY CONTROL DOCK UNIONS WHO ARE THREATENING FIJI'S LIFELINE IF GOF BREAKS STRIKE, ILLEGAL UNDER FIJI'S LAWS, WITH NON-UNION LABOR. USG WAS BROUGHT UNDER FIRE AS OMITTING TO OFFER ASSISTANCE IN FILLING IMPORT GAP. I MADE POINTS THAT (A) IT WELL KNOWN U.S. BUSINESS WELCOMES TRADE WITH FIJI AND USG HAS PROGRAMS PROMOTE THIS, (B) IF HE MEANT DIRECT USG AID, THAT IS MATTER INVOLVING CONGRESS, (C) PRC, UNLIKE DEMOCRACIES, IN DIRECT CONTROL ALL MEANS OF SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION, HENCE COULD MAKE OFFERS OF KIND HE DESCRIBED, (D) GOF HAD NOT, IN ANY CASE, SOUGHT OUR ASSURANCES OR ASSISTANCE THIS MATTER. MIN FINANCE, STANDING NEARBY, ADDED CORRECTLY THAT EMB HAS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN GOF PLAN INCORPORATE OVERSEAS ORDERS UNDELIVERED BECAUSE OF STRIKE INTO ONE SHIPMENT FOR PLACEMENT OUTSIDE USUAL SUPPLY CHANNELS.

C. TO POINT (D), PRIMEMIN REPLIED WITH SOME HAUTEUR, "WE DO NOT GO BEGGING FROM OUR FRIENDS." IN RESPECT TO CHINESE, HE ASSERTED THAT IF REELECTED HE WOULD SEE TO IT THAT HEAVY EMPHASIS WOULD BE PLACED ON TRADE WITH PRC TO EXCLUSION TRADITIONAL SOURCES. MOREOVER, "I HAVE BEEN INVITED TO VISIT CHINA, AND I SHALL GO." SOMEWHAT DISJOINTEDLY, PRIMEMIN DECLARED, "I WILL NEVER AGAIN TRAVEL THROUGH AUSTRALIA."
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 WELLIN 02791 01 OF 02 170355Z

D. I FEEL ERUPTION, OBVIOUSLY SIMMERING FOR SOME DAYS AS FOREIGN UNIONS BOOSTED PRESSURE ON GOF WITH BOYCOTT THREATS, WOULD NOT HAVE OCCURED EXCEPT FOR APPROACHING ELECTIONS. MARA HAS NOT MADE GOOD ON HIS PROMISE TO KEEP PORTS OPEN (AS OPPOSITION HAS REMINDED PUBLIC), SHORTAGES BEGINNING CROP UP, AND THERE APPEARS TO BE MORE SYMPATHY FOR STRIKERS THAN IN 1971 WALK-OUT WHEN REPORTEDLY SCORES OF FIJIAN VOLUNTEERED TO WORK PORTS.

E. ALTHOUGH NEW ZEALAND HICOM MUTTERED AS PRIMEMIN DEPARTED, "THE MAN'S BLOODY IRRATIONAL," AND MARA DID SEEM SOMEWHAT UNFOCUSSED, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT HE FEELS BACK IS TO WALL AS HE ENDEAVORS ENFORCE GOF LABOR LAWS WHILE COPING WITH STRIKE'S EFFECTS ON VULNERABLE NATION. HAVING DISCUSSED PRIME-MINS HARANGUE AT SOME LENGTH WITH FINANCEMIN, I AM CONVINCED RATU MARA'S IRE OVER U.S. SILENCE, THOUGH UNWARRANTED, IS REAL AND THAT WE SHOULD NOT REMAIN MUTE ON SUBJECT.

F. ACCORDINGLY I URGENTLY RECOMMEND THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO CALL ON PRIMEMIN ASAP TO CONVEY FOLLOWING POINTS: USG FULLY UNDERSTANDS GOF POSITION IN RESPECT TO STRIKE AND DAMAGING

PRESSURES FOREIGN UNIONS ARE EXERTING ON VULNERABLE ISLAND
NATION. WE CONSTRUE HIS CRITICISM OF U.S. AS UNRESPONSIVE TO
FIJI'S DILEMMA OVER SOURCES OF SUPPLY TO MEAN HE WOULD WELCOME
OUR ASSURANCES THERE WOULD BE NO OBSTACLE TO THE LOADING AND
DESPATCH OF FIJI-BOUND GOODS IN U.S. PORTS. BARRING UNFORESEEN
U.S. DOMESTIC TRADE UNION REACTION, HE HAS THIS ASSURANCE.
WE WELCOME ANY MOVEMENT ON THE PART OF FIJI TRADERS OR GOF
TO INCREASE COMMERCE WITH U.S;

G. TO BE EFFECTIVE AND TO STAY WITHIN PACE OF EFFECTS, APPROACH
SHOULD BE MADE PROMPTLY.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC.
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PAGE 04 WELLIN 02791 01 OF 02 170355Z

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 02791 02 OF 02 170500Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 EB-07 SS-15 SP-02 INR-07
L-03 SSO-00 INRE-00 SIL-01 H-01 /058 W
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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3593
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY SUVA
AMCONSUL AUCKLAND

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 WELLINGTON 02791

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 2791 VICE 2792)

DEPT PASSCINCPAC FOR POLAD

3. BEGIN EMBASSY WELLINGTON COMMENT: EMBOFF DISCUSSED FIJI
SITUATION WITH HEAD, MFA PACIFIC DIVISION (COTTON) EARLY

JULY 17. COTTON SAID MFA HAD NOT YET BEEN INFORMED OF AFOREMENTIONED RATU MARA DIATRIBE BY GNZ HICOM IN SUVA BUT OFFERED THE FOLOWING:

A. FIJIAN ARBITRATION COURT WAS SCHEDULED FOR MEET JULY 16 AND WHILE HE HAD NOT YET RECEIVED WORD OF RESULTS, THERE IS GOOD POSSIBLITY THAT COURT WOULD ORDER RESUMPTION OF WORK JULY 18 PENDING ARBITRATION OF DISPUTE AND THAT FIJIAN DOCK WORKERS WOULD AGREE;

B. THERE HAVE BEEN NO RPT NO SHIPS LOADED IN FIJI BY NON-UNION LABOR SINCE STRIKE BEGAN;

C. HE IS UNAWARE OF ANY FIJI-BOUND SHIPS WHICH NZ WATERSIDERS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 WELLIN 02791 02 OF 02 170500Z

HAVE REFUSED TO WORK;

D. REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND SEAMEN'S UNION IS NOW IN FIJI TO TRY AND "TALK SENSE" TO JAILED NZ SEAMEN WHO WERE ARRESTED JULY 13 FOR ALTERCATION WITH FIJIAN POLICE AFTER NZ SEAMEN REFUSED TO SHIFT NZ SHIP TO MAKE BERTHAGE ROOM FOR FIJIAN "NON-UNION" SHIP.

4. THOUGH USG OBVIOUSLY CANNOT GIVE ASSURANCE CONCERNING CONDUCT OF AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS, I FULLY UNDERSTAND RATU MARA'S PREDICAMENT AND HOPE WE CAN FIND SOME WAY TO BE RESPONSIVE TO HIS NEEDS. HE HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY FRIENDLY TOTHE UNITED STATES; HE HAS PLAYED A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL AFFAIRS OF INTEREST TO US; AND HE IS FACED WITH AN ELECTIN WHICH HE COULD LOSE AND WHICH, IN TURN, COULD PRODUCE A CHAOTIC SITUATION DAMAGING TO OUR INTEREST. WE DO NOT SUGGEST GETTING INTO THE BIDDING WITH THE CDR ON WHICH OF US IS THE BETTER FRIEND OF FIJI, BUT WE ARE CONCERNED THAT RATU MARA MAY UNWITTINGLY FIND HIMSELF TOO DEEPLY IN DEBT TO THE CHINESE.

5. WITHOUT CREATING INTEREST WHERE THERE IS NONE ALREADY, REQUEST DEPARTMENT ADVISE WELLINGTON AND SUVA WHAT PRESENT US LONGSHOREMEN ACTIVITY IS WITH RESPECT TO HANDLING FIJI-BOUND OR EX-FIJI SHIPMENTS. IF FIJIAN SHIMENTS ARE BEING HANDLED NORMALLY,REQUEST CHARGE' SUVA BEAUTHORIZED TO ADVISE RATU MARA OF THIS, ADDING AGAIN THAT USG, OF COURSE, DOES NOT HAVE CONTROL OF ACTIVITIES OF INDEPENDENT AMERICAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. WE WOULD HESITATE TO GO FURTHER, E.G., EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR RATU MARA'S DELEMNA, BECAUSE HE MAY USE SUCH A STATEMENT PUBLICLY. IF THE DEPARTMENT CAN SUGGEST ANY OTHER WAY WE CAN APPEAR TO BE FORTHCOMING WITHOUT INTERPOSING THE US BETWEEN GOF AND TRADE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 WELLIN 02791 02 OF 02 170500Z

UNIONISTS, WE WOULD WELCOME THIS. SELDEN

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